



MEDIA RELEASE

31 May 2023

Be inspired to be a reef naturalist

We all dream of being a marine biologist for a day. Any you can by joining Reef Blitz between 1 and 8 June 2023

Students, beach walkers, snorkellers, SCUBA divers, fishers and conservationists are invited to fill in knowledge gaps and join an annual event and become reef naturalists to learn more about reef species.

Adj Assoc Prof Adam Smith urged people to get involved in the 2023 ReefBlitz community event to find and record wild species, both in and out of the water, at locations from Torres Strait to Bundaberg.

“Citizen science initiatives such as this are a great way for encouraging local and global communities to be inspired and get involved in understanding, monitoring and ultimately protecting their local reef environment,” he said.

“You can collaborate with local schools, scientists, tourism, fishers, conservation, indigenous and government to conduct surveys of beaches, bays, islands or reefs. We are focusing on training people in the popular iNaturalist app which is the largest citizen science project in the world with over 140 million observations of 429,000 species by over 2,672,000 observers.

“From bird watching to mangroves, clams to fish and even sharks, ReefBlitz has something to interest everyone who is passionate about protecting and preserving the reef biodiversity and oceans”.

International student Tobbias Miisbukpo has almost 100 observations of fish and corals and said “Reef Blitz is a great opportunity to get involved effortlessly into marine science, you just need a camera or a GoPro or a smartphone. Once you start using iNaturalist, every snorkeling/scuba diving session becomes a chance to learning a bit more about what you can see underwater.”

“Take up the challenge and become a citizen scientist for the day as part of ReefBlitz. Perhaps you will photograph and record a new species for your area or for the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. We will share daily updates of species and naturalists”.

Visit <https://www.facebook.com/events/6302099579829762> for more information and to join the online training event at 2pm on the 31 May.

CONTACT: Adj Assoc Professor Adam Smith, 0418726584